THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The Prime minister of the Russian Federation during his visit to New Delhi in December 1998 described India as "an influential member of the international community" and "a strong and appropriate candidate" for permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council. There is wide agreement on the need for inclusion of developing countties in any expansion of permanent membership of the UN Security council. However, there is as yet no agreement on the candidates, or criteria.

Nuclear tests by Pakistan

369. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt's attention was drawn to the news-item published in the Times of India dated January 18, 1999, captioned "Are Pak N-arms more dangerous" referring to a CIA revelation that the material used in the nuclear tests by Pakistan in May 1998 contained low levels of weapon grade plutonium; and

(b) if so, how far and in what respect the Nuclear bombs tested by Pakistan were more dangerous or potentially more dangerous?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Nuclear devices, whether based on fission of Uranium or Plutonium, cause the same effect if the yield is identical. However, the CIA revelations, about the possibility of transfer of Plutonium from a third country to Pakistan, if correct, would be a matter of concern.

Safe stay of Mr. Rongthong Dorjee in India

370. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would ensure safe stay or Mr. rongthong Kunley Dorjee in India as a free person; and

(b) whether Government would initiate a dialogue with Bhutan and Nepal to ensure the safe return of people driven out of Bhutan and staying in India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) Judicial proceedings for the extradition of Rongthong Kunley Dorjee are in progress, pursuant to the request made by Royal Government of Bhutan, under Extradition Agreement signed between India and Bhutan in 1996. Mr. Dorjee is on bail while the matter remains sub-judice.

(b) Indian and Bhutanese citizens enjoy the facility of an open border between the two countries. As far as the issue of refugees claiming Bhutanese nationality, staying in Nepal, is concerned, this is being discussed bilaterally betwen Bhutan and Nepal. While Government of India would welcome the resolution of this issue to the mutual satisfaction of Bhutan and Nepal, its considered position is that involvement of any third party will only complicate the matter and make it more intractable.

US Ambassador's remark on India's Nuclear Preparedness

371. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US Ambassador to India has recently questioned India's nuclear preparedness to meet potent threats from

various concerns, as reported in the Asian Age on 6th January, 1999 under the caption US to India: List nuclear missiles needs;

(b) if so, whether such act constitutes breach of international law which prohibits intervention in the internal affairs of an independent sovereign nation; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to ensure that such irresponsible act is not repeated any more?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) the Asian Age of 6th January, 1999 carried a report containing excerpts from an interview by the US Ambassador in which the Ambassador *inter alia* reportedly described GOI' policy statements on no-first-use of nuclear weapons and not indulging in any arms race as "encouraging but...general". He further expressed the hope that Government would be "more clear in defining what this notion is, as it was vital to de-escalating tensions and not getting caught in an unintended arms race in the region". This does not amount to "questioning nuclear preparedness to meet potent threats".

(c) government have made clear that its minimum nuclear deterrent policy is not a fixity and will be determined in the light of our security perceptions. Government has also stated that it will not accept any limitations on its defence capabilities for responding to possible future threats to national security.

China's protest against statement regarding Taiwan

372. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the statement made by the union Urban Affairs Minister wherein he has described Taiwan as an independent country;

(b) whether China has protested against such a description of Taiwan; and

(c) if so; what is Government reaction thereon and whether there has been a change in Government policy with regard to Taiwan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Government's attention has been drawn to the press reports in this regard.

(b) and (c) In response to a Chinese demarche, we have reiterated Government's consistent policy on relations with Taiwan. Government of India do not maintain any official or diplomatic relations with the "Republic of China" Under this policy framework, Government promotes non-official economic, trade and cultural links with Taiwan to enhance trade, tourism and investment.

Indo-American Dialogue

373. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI JANARDHASNA POOJARY:

Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the eighth round of Indo-American dialogue on issues relating to security, disarmament and non-proliferation took place in New Delhi in the last week of January, 1999;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the final outcome of the dialogue;

(c) whether at the end of the dialogue a joint statement was issued wherein both sides expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the talks; and

(d) if so, the basic of such satisfaction and whether any concrete agreement was arrived on any specific issue?